K-13

Esau Watkins House Water Street, Chestertown c. 1739

The earliest remaining dwelling on the Chester River in Chestertown is that located at 109 Water Street. Built by Esau and Sarah Watkins, it stands on Lot No. 11, which was deeded to them on August 24, 1739 by Sarah's father, William Ringgold. In that deed, as well in other deeds, and in his own will, Esau is listed as a blacksmith by trade.

In general form and material the house is similar to the Buck-Bacchus Store, a building constructed a few years earlier on the corner of High and Queen Streets. Like the store, the principal facade of the Watkins house was the narrower dimension of the house. Its front door, however, was located not in the center of the three bays, but to the left. This facade and its southwest counterpart are laid in flemish bond with glazed headers. Again like the store, the water table jogs above the basement windows, which have segmental arches of alternating stretchers and double headers. The roof is hipped and has a plain plaster cove cornice. There is one dormer on the facade and two on the flanking sides.

The plan of the Watkins House appears to have had two rooms per floor with a central chimney stack adjacent its southwest wall and the stair on the opposite side of the chimney with passage between. Its plan would have been similar to a typical New England house, except for the placement of the entrance. Being constructed at grade on the river

-trate.

side, the kitchen was located in the basement, like other houses on the street. The presence of soot on the cellar beams in the room closest to the river points to its original use as a kitchen. In the attic or third floor, original feather edge board partitions separate the hall from the bedrooms. There is one original four-panel door and one five-panel door dating from late in the century.

In his will, Esau Watkins left his dwelling to his son, John and for whom he stipulated Dr. William Murray as guardian until he reached 21 years of age. In 1776, John was planning to leave the area. He was heavily indebted to the firm of Morgan and Sluby, and the house was mortgaged to them to secure the debt. Interestingly, three years later he was still living in Kent County.

purchased in 1820 by Samuel Merritt of Godlington Manor. It remained in the Merritt family until 1880 when it was sold to Benjamin Fleming for \$1000. It was probably during the Fleming period that the house was lengthened by 6'10" toward the river. A fate similar to 103 Water Street befell this house: the belt course was chopped off, windows were altered and the difference in brickwork was concealed by the addition of a coat of stucco. The old central chimney was removed and a new one installed in the new addition. The floor plan was altered to suit the owners It oremained in the Fleming ownership until 1944 when Miss Francis Denton, of River House, purchased it and built the block and brick wall separating the two properties.

Louis and Ellen Perry Skinner acquired the property in 1946 and

remodeled it into the existing plan, with a side stairhall, kitchen and pantry in the front, dining room in the center with bay window overlooking the River House garden and a living room. A screened porch was built on the river side which was later enclosed.

- 1. Lib. DD 5, fol. 140.
- 2. Lib. DD 5, fol. 374.

K-13 Esau Watkins House

c. 1740

Chestertown

prifate

This is by tradition the oldest house on Water Street and both architectural and documentary evidence suggest the claim is at least reasonable. It is a classic example of the small scale early Georgian hipped roof brick dwelling, its original shape marred only by the alteration of the rear hip; it was knew replaced by a gable when a small addition was made. Esau Watkins and his wife, Sarah Ringgold, received the land as a wedding gift from William Ringgold, father of the bride, in 1739, presumably to build on. Documentary evidence proves the house was up by xkxxxxxx 1742.

# MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

# INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

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AND/OR COMMON				70 10		
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STATE	•	VICINITY OF		COUNTY		
Manuland		•		Leno		
3 CLASSIFIC	ATION					
CATEGORY	OWNERCHUR					
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5 LOCATION	OF LEGAL DESCR	IPTION	Liber	#: DIP 37		
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	Mant County Court					
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6 REPRESENT	TATION IN EXIST	ING SURVEYS				
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DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS						
CITY, TOWN				STATE		

K-13

CONDITION

\_\_EXCELLENT

\_FAIR

\_\_DETERIORATED

\_\_RUINS

CHECK ONE

\_\_UNALTERED

CHECK ONE

MORIGINAL SITE

\_\_MOVED DATE\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This house is located on the southeast (river) side of Water Street in Chestertown on the southern half of Water Lot 11. It is built close to the street.

It is a small 2] story brick Georgian style duelling with a hipped roof: there is a gabled dorner on the front section of the hip and two each on the two cides. (The roar hip was replaced by a gable end when a short addition was now there.) The house is 3 bays wide and 3 deep, but is about twice as deep as it is wide.

The basement is brick and there is a rather table which jogs over the basement windows have segmental arches. The entrance is in the north (left) bar. There are five brick steps to a hereal door which is fruend by fluted Daric pilesters. There is a compice above the door with miliature dentile. There is a 5-page transprintles the corpice.

All of the mindows on the first story of the facade have segmental arches and wood sills. The second story mindows have wood lintels and sills. All mindows on the house, including those in the dormers, are 6/6 double hung such, and all of those on the first and second stories have lowered shutters.

There is a cove cornice. The roof is of composition shingles, and there is a chimney in the southeast corner (right rear) of the house, thich was originally in the center. The brick is laid in Flerish bond with glassed healers.

There are signs of an original belt comes on the sorth (right) elevation. There is also a door in the left bay of this elevation is additionable a central bay window and a smaller window in the right bay. The original arrangement appears to have been three windows, one somewhat close to the front than would be symmetrical. Only the door netwine its segmental arch. On the second story of this elevation there are three windows directly over the door, bay window, and right bay window beneath. All windows very vivous very very vivous very vivous very very vivous very vivous very vivous very vivous very very vivous very very vivous very very vivous very very vivo

The north elevation (left) has two windows on each story. Amparently both first story windows had segmental arches, though only the one in the front bay does now.

The abort (argrorimately 6 feet) addition to the rear is continuous with the main was of the house, but is laid in common bond. A screened purch has been added berend it.

PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	ECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANOSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<b>ZARCHITECTURE</b>	EOUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<u></u> 1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INOUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 7739-7712

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This is by tradition the oldest house on Mater Street; \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* the Mymoon-lingsold house (or "abbet") as \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* ore-date it by h-5 years, but the claim stages to be fairly reasonable. It is a class is example of the stall scale early corgian dualling, its original shape man \*\*\*cd only by the alteration of the rour him.

William tinggold favo the land for the house to his daughter, Sarah dinggold Mathins and his sen-in-law, seen Matkins, in 1739, presumably for them to build on. The prisonce that the house was soon built is a dood in which Matkins transferred the property to John Calder and back again (in trust) in 1742: in the dood is montioned "a tenement or mesonage." Matkins loft the property to his sen, John, by a will dated 1757.

It is worth following the title a in further for some remarks made later an. John maticips and the property to The as Kemp in 1779. The deed in this cale mentions "the brick house where Esan Watkins formerly dwelt" specifically. The waxtaxin southwestern half of four Lot 14 across the street had got into the transfers by now. (Esar bought it in 175h, left it to his daughter, who later sold it to John.) It starts a part of the property until the early nine teenth century.

DATE

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE	ON	CEDADAME	CHEED	TE	NECESSARY
CONTINUE	OIA	SEPARATE	SHEET	TT.	NECESSARY

### 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION : Finding at a point on the authory side of the et where the division line between the lands and the lands now or formerly of Elizabeth Trew Aussell (23.50 feat wide) intersect said easterly line of Front Street and running thence by and with said Tustell lunds perpendicular to the line of Front St. a distance of 108 feet, nore or less, to the waters of the Chester River; thence by and with the waters of said river in a southwesterly direction a distance of 38.30 feet to a point tarked by a cross out in the top of a concrete retaining wall; thence by and with a dividing line to the lands and parallel to the said Russell lands and also perpendicular to the line of Front St. a distance of 107

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES fort, more or less, to the commer of a 6-inch by 6-inch monument set in the easterly side of PronSTATE Street; the need and with the easter County ide of Pront St., a distance of 38.5 Part to the soint of beginning.

STATE COUNTY

### III FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert Waill Missorie Bite Surveyor

---- 7006 Empland Mistorical Trust and Turn of Chestortown

STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust

The Shaw House, 21 State Circle

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(301) 267-1438

Summary of Title Search: 109 Water Street

William Ringold to Sarah Ringold Watkins Liber 5 200 (1739) (Water Lot 11)

Esau Wat'ing to John Calder Liber 5 518 (17/12) John Calder to Esau Watkins Liber 5 521 (1742)

(Mater Lot 11 ... tenement or measuage) Watkins buys south testern half of Torm Lot 11 across the street in 1751; from Do dall Thomson of C.A. County for 131.

Esau Watkins to John Watkins Wills Liber 4 25 (1757)

(Water Lot 11 and 109 Water Street. Yelf lot 11 goes to daughter, Sarch.)

John Wattins to Thomas Kamp DD 5 374 (1779) 52500 (Wattins had bought half lot 11 from Serah and presumably the transfer developed it because dead refers to other tenements in addition to 109 and the price sugrests fairly substantial)

Thomas Kemp to Benjamin H. Morgan and William Blubey, in an act of ejettment.

William Slubey to Benjamin Morgan (1799)

Senjamin Morgan to Robert Anderson TW 1 378 (1800) 4300 (All of water lot 11, including 109 Water Street, and the southwesterning half of Torn Lot 14. Price drop suggests something happened on Lot 14...)

James Houston, Trustee for Robert Anderson, to John Quilby. (Water Lot 11 and 109 Water Street)

John Quirby lawes property to his daugh er, Sonhia Quimby Primrose.

James L. Pri rose and Suphia to Ann Page IN 4 11 7 (1822) 3650.

Ann Page to Samuel Morritt TW 4 284 (1820) \$800

Samuel Merritt leaves it to his daughter, Trances Olivia Merritt Watkins (1942) "worth \$800)

Frances died in 1877, her husband, Colonel Edward Wilkens, in 1878.

Imes A. Pource, Trustee for Wilkens, to Ben F. Mening SR 1 308 (1880)

Mary J. Fleming to Mary Elizabeth Fleming, her daughter, RRA 6 567 (1926)

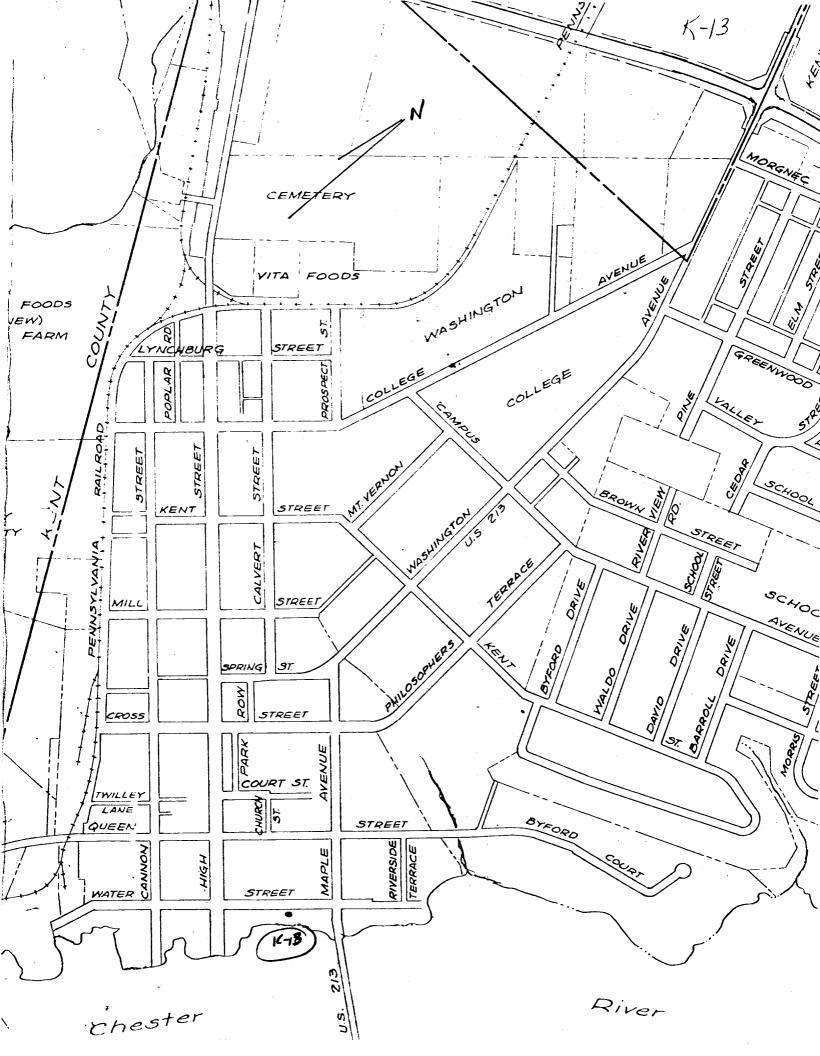
Merbert E. Porkins, for Mery J. and Pen F. Fleming, to Frances B. Denton RAS 33 418 (1944) 7700

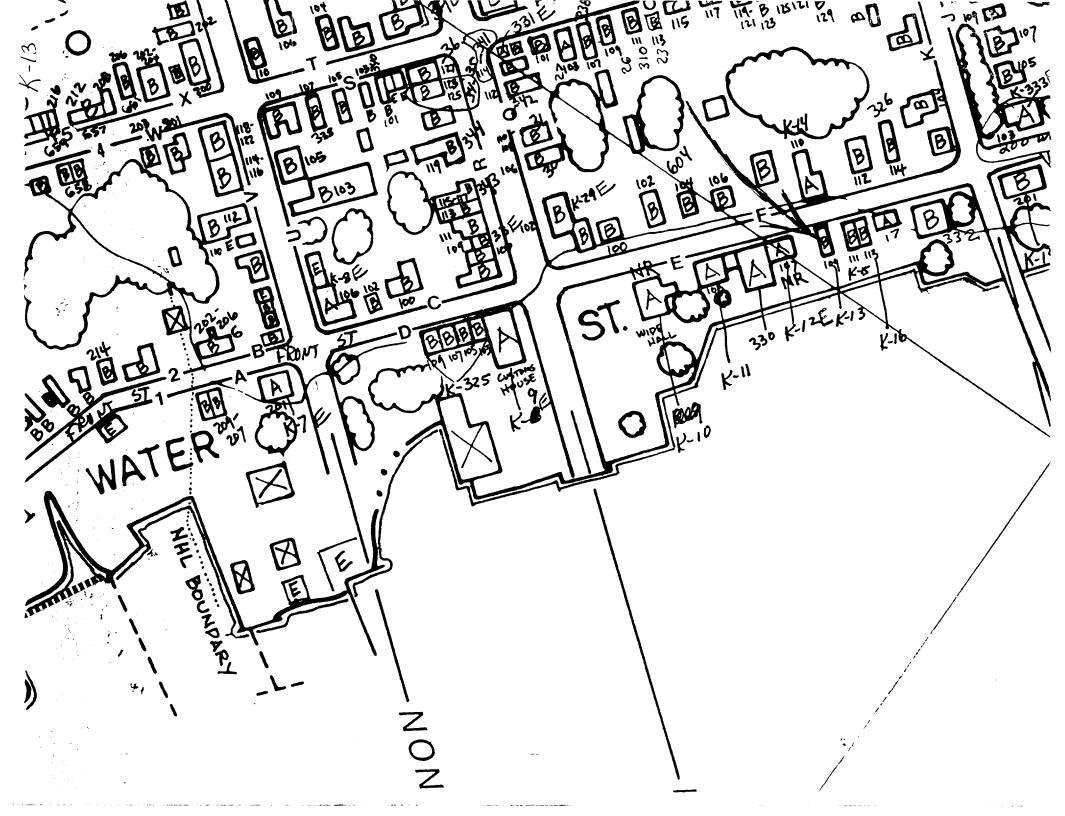
Frances B. Denton to Louis E. Skinner and Ellen RAS 39 49 (1946)

Blen P. Skinner, widow, to Houis Skinner MG 43- 343 (1955)

Lo is Skinner and Elizabeth to Mary M. Connor THP 25 182 (1967)

L. s P. Connor to Robert Bryan EMP 37 452 (1970) 18.000.







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